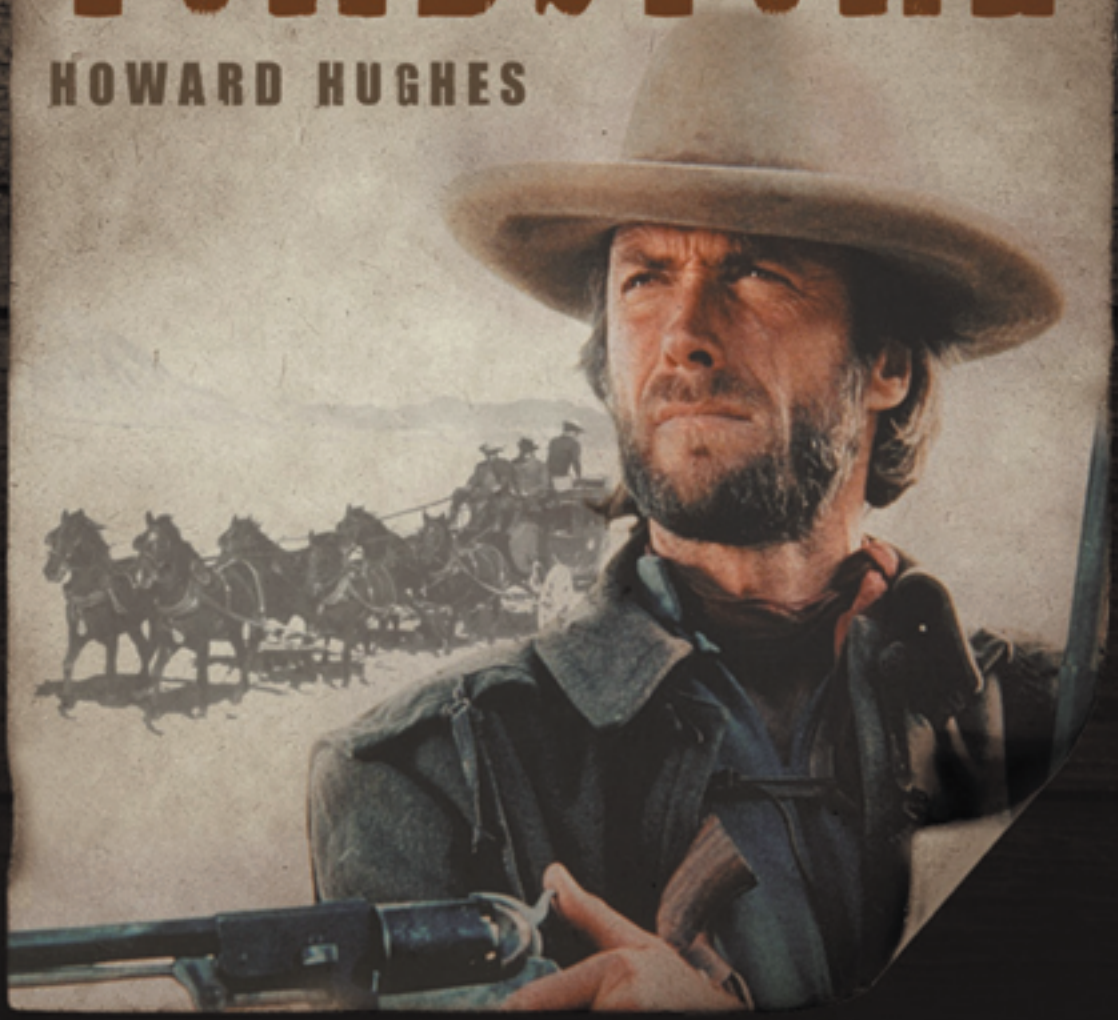
VISIT…

THE FILMGOERS' GUIDE TO THE GREAT WESTERNS

STAGECOACH TO TOMBSTONE

HOWARD HUGHES



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1

'The Tumbril Awaits'

— *Stagecoach* (1939)

***Stagecoach* (1939)**
Credits
DIRECTOR – John Ford
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER –Walter Wanger
STORY – Ernest Haycox
SCREENPLAY – Dudley Nichols
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY – Bert Glennon
EDITORS – Dorothy Spence and Walter Reynolds
ART DIRECTOR – Alexander Toluboff
MUSIC DIRECTOR – Boris Morros
MUSIC ARRANGERS – Richard Hageman, W. Franke Harling, Louis Gruenberg, Leo Shuken and John Leipold
A Walter Wanger Production
Released by United Artists
97 minutes
Cast
Claire Trevor (Dallas Jeffries); John Wayne (Henry, alias The Ringo Kid); John Caradine (Hatfield, the gambler); Thomas Mitchell (Dr Josiah Boone); Andy Devine (Buck Rickabaugh, the driver); Donald Meek (Samuel Peacock, whisky drummer); Louise Platt (Lucy Mallory); Tim Holt (Lt Blanchard); George Bancroft (Curley Wilcox, Sheriff of Tonto); Berton Churchill (Henry Gatewood, the banker); Tom Tyler (Luke Plummer); Chris-Pin Martin (Chris, at Apache Wells); Elvira Martin (Yakima, Chris's wife); Francis Ford (Sgt Billy Pickett, at Dry Fork); Marga Daighton (Mrs Pickett); Kent Odell (Billy Pickett Jnr); Yakima Canutt (Cavalry scout); Chief John Big Tree (Cheyenne army scout); Jack Pennick (Jerry, barman); Many Mules (Geronimo);

Cornelius Keefe (Captain Whitney); Florence Lake (Mrs Nancy Whitney); Louis Mason (Sheriff); Duke Lee (Sheriff of Lordsburg); Brenda Fowler (Mrs Gatewood); Walter McGrail (Captain Sickel); Joseph Rickson (Hank Plummer); Vester Pegg (Ike Plummer); Nora Cecil (Doc Boone's landlady); Mary Kathleen Walker (Lucy's baby); Iron Eyes Cody (Apache archer)

* * *

Stagecoach, John Ford's first sound western, a desert-set tale of Apache attacks and human endurance, had its unlikely origins in European literature. 'Stage to Lordsburg', a story written by Ernest Haycox, was published in *Collier's* magazine in April 1937. Haycox's story was partially inspired by 'Boule de Suif' ('Ball of Fat') by Guy de Maupassant, the story of a group of Dieppe-bound coach passengers during the Franco-Prussian War. At an inn, Elizabeth Rousset, a prostitute passenger (whose unflattering nickname gives the story its title) sleeps with a Prussian officer to ensure their safe passage, thus saving the lives of her fellow travellers ('The need justifies the means'). But thereafter, they ostracise her, refusing to share their food, even though previously she has shared hers with them, revealing their hypocrisy.

In 'Stage to Lordsburg', eight passengers travel the dangerous road from Tonto, Arizona, through Apache country, to Lordsburg, New Mexico. They travel via stops at Gap Station and Al Schrieber's ranch. After Schrieber's, which they discover is a burnt-out ruin, the Apaches attack, but the group manage to struggle through. During the journey, prostitute Henriette falls for drifter Malpais Bill, who is travelling to Lordsburg to 'collect a debt': mysterious revenge on two men, Plummer and Shanley. In Haycox's story, the disparate passengers are mostly nameless: a woman on her way to marry an infantry officer, a gambler, a whisky drummer from St Louis, a cattleman en route to New Mexico, an Englishman with a sporting rifle, Henriette (who runs a brothel in Lordsburg), Malpais Bill, driver Happy Stuart and shotgun rider John Strang.

Director Ford liked the story and bought the rights for $7,500. In Dudley Nichols's reworked screenplay, retitled *Stagecoach*, the driver is named Buck, his shotgun rider is Sheriff Curley Wilcox, while the passengers are Lucy Mallory (the pregnant wife of a cavalry officer), Hatfield (a gambler), Doc Boone (a drunken quack), Samuel Peacock (a whisky drummer), Henry Gatewood (an embezzling banker), Dallas Jeffries (a prostitute who has been run out of Tonto) and wanted outlaw the Ringo Kid, who is travelling to Lordsburg to take revenge on Luke Plummer, the murderer of his father and brother. The stagecoach leaves Tonto, escorted by the cavalry led by Lieutenant Blanchard. Geronimo is on the warpath, having jumped the reservation. Outside town, escaped convict Ringo joins the party, hoping to travel to Lordsburg, but is arrested by Sheriff Wilcox, riding shotgun. They pass through the swing station at Dry Fork, separating from their escort, and continue to Apache Wells, where drunken Doc has to sober up to deliver Mrs Mallory's baby girl. The party press on to Lee's

Ferry, but discover the Apaches have beaten them to it: burning the buildings, massacring the inhabitants and demolishing the ferry. The stagecoach manages to ford the river, but the Apaches attack. Hatfield is killed, and Buck and Peacock are wounded. Ringo's heroics save the day, but the defenders are out of ammunition when the 7th Cavalry arrive in the nick of time, routing the raiders. In Lordsburg, the travelling companions go their separate ways and Gatewood is arrested. The sheriff releases Ringo long enough for him to take revenge on the Plummer boys and then allows Ringo and Dallas to ride away together.

Both Gary Cooper and Joel McCrea were suggested for Ringo, but Ford wanted John Wayne. Then languishing in B-westerns at Republic, Wayne cut an imposing figure at six-feet-four-inches tall, plus his hat. Ford had known Wayne since Wayne was a prop man. He had given Wayne bit parts in the Irish-set *Hangman's House* (1928 – with Wayne overenthusiastically cheering a cross-county steeplechase won by 'The Bard') and the naval dramas *Salute* (1929) and *Men Without Women* (1930). The actor then had a brief brush with stardom on *The Big Trail*. Marlene Dietrich was a prospective Dallas, but Ford thought her too old and cast Claire Trevor, who received top billing and the highest fee: $15,000. Other roles were taken by reliable character actors: Thomas Mitchell, a stage actor, was cast as Josiah Boone, M.D. Cadaverous John

The timeless panorama of Monument Valley: The East and West Mitten and Merrick Butte, which John Ford first featured in *Stagecoach* (1939). The stage route can still be seen winding through the valley. (Photograph courtesy of Victoria Millington and Mark Chester.)

Carradine, a future horror regular, played cad Hatfield, complete with cane and cape, who resembled villainous Bill Freel from *Tumbleweeds*. Glasgow-born Donald Meek was nervous drummer Peacock. Andy Devine (real name Jeremiah Schwartz) with his honking voice, became synonymous with westerns following his casting as stage driver Buck. He was cast because first choice Ward Bond 'couldn't drive a six-up' rig. Series western hero Tom Tyler was cast against type as Luke Plummer and Wayne's friend Yakima Canutt appeared as an Indian scout. Ford cast his brother Francis in a cameo as veteran Sergeant Billy Pickett at Dry Fork, with Seneca Indian, Chief John Big Tree, playing a Cheyenne scout; Big Tree was born Isaac Johnny John and it is his head that appeared on the 1912 Indian Head nickel coin.

Stagecoach was assigned a modest $546,200 budget, of which Ford received $50,000. It was shot in 47 days, from 31 October to 23 December 1938, partly in Monument Valley, on the border between Utah and Arizona. There are three types of rock formation in Monument Valley: aiguilles (the totemic tall, thin spires), mesas (flat-topped, cliff-edged 'table land') and buttes (the cathedral-like towers most associated with the valley, with their scree slopes and sheer cliffs). The Monument Valley travelling scenes were shot first, in seven days, deploying the stagecoach, the cavalry escort, an army camp and an Apache war party, played by Navajos who lived in the valley, with a few actual Apaches for close-ups; Geronimo himself was played by an Apache named Many Mules. Various monuments appear in the film, including East and West Mitten and Merrick Butte, Castle Rock, Sentinel Mesa and El Capitan. The crew moved to Lucerne Dry Lake, in the Mojave Desert, for the Apache attack (the same location used for the land rush scene in Ford's silent *3 Bad Men*). Wayne was on location for this scene, but many close-ups of the stagecoach during the attack were process shots, with the lead actors in front of a screen projecting Lucerne footage of galloping Apaches and the stage driver waggling the reins (which were usually attached to elasticated arm stretchers). These process shots look no more convincing than the risible opening shots of a low-budget production like *The Vigilantes Return* (1947 – also starring Andy Devine).

Ford's 'Overland Stage Line' coach was an authentic maroon Concord, which had seen 85 years' service on the El Paso to San Diego line (Concords were available in a variety of colours, but are almost always maroon on screen). Also named Pitchin' Betsys, due to their rocking motion, stagecoaches were so-called because they completed the journey in stages between relay stations, where the horses were changed. The rest of *Stagecoach* was shot closer to home: Lee's Ferry was on the Kern River, near Kernville. The stations at Dry Fork and Apache Wells are the same set – note the three-log corral gateway and the distinctive rock formations in the background – at the Iverson Movie Ranch, Chatsworth. Tonto was the western street at Republic, while Lordsburg was shot at the Goldwyn Studios. The distinctive gap the stagecoach drives through as the Apaches attack is Beale's Cut, Newhall, which was also the outlaw's haven of Devil's Valley in Ford's *Straight Shooting* (1917) and the Black Hills railroad shortcut 'Brandon's Pass' in *The Iron Horse*. Ford distributes the Monument Valley footage to good effect throughout the film, as punctuation between the California-shot scenes, though in one shot the stagecoach is travelling away from

the East and West Mittens and Merrick Butte, then later, supposedly further on in the trip, passes them again.

Stagecoach married the frantic action of Wayne's B-westerns to real drama. Yakima Canutt worked as both stunt double and actor on Wayne's thirties westerns – in the confusing chase footage, Canutt often chased himself. Canutt was born Enos Edward Canutt, on a ranch in Colefax, Washington. He became a horse breaker, was northwest champion bronco rider and a world champion rodeo rider (in the rodeo-set *The Man from Utah* [1934] he played champion 'bronc buster' Cheyenne Kent). His name 'Yakima' came from his rodeo billing as 'The Cowboy from Yakima'. He appeared in many silent westerns, but his stunt work brought him recognition, especially in the Lone Star westerns: he later won a special Oscar in 1966 for his services to movie stunting.

On *Stagecoach*, Canutt was billed in the press as responsible for second unit direction and stunts. He doubled for the Apache who leaps onto the stage's lead horse and is then shot by Ringo. Canutt fell beneath the horses' hooves and was dragged along, before the stage rolled over him, with Canutt positioned precisely between the wheels. The Concord stage needed six horses to pull it at speed (it weighed 2,500 pounds, with an ash frame and poplar bodywork) and Ford's crew travelled along at up to 45 miles an hour to photograph the chase. There were no camera cars and the crew used normal cars with their equipment strapped on board. For a shot of the stage horses from the driver's-eye-view, Ford positioned a camera on the driver's seat and hollered instructions through the window of the speeding coach. Canutt doubled for Wayne in the scenes where Ringo climbs out of the coach onto the roof to return fire, and also when Ringo tries to bring the rein-less runaway team under control, jumping forward from one pair of horses to the next. As Wayne remembered, 'I was satisfied to settle for the close-up.' Canutt performed many horse falls in Apache garb, as part of the pursuing war party, while Cherokee Indian Iron Eyes Cody, an expert horseman, fired arrows at the stage. These high-speed stunts weren't completely new to audiences. In *Riders of Destiny* (1934) Singin' Sandy (Canutt, doubling for Wayne) had jumped from his horse onto the team pulling a water wagon, dropped down and hung under the wagon, then climbed up into the driver's seat. William S. Hart scoffed that *Stagecoach*'s chase was ridiculous, as real Apaches would have shot the horses.

Ford's style contrasts the massive empty landscapes with the intimacy of human lives played out on this grand stage. Ford's photography, by Bert Glennon, and his eye for composition are most evident in the scenes filmed in Monument Valley, which to Ford was an ethereal world of searching, towering mountains stretching heavenwards towards spectacular skies. This beauty masks the ever-present danger of imminent attack. In *Stagecoach*'s title sequence, Indian riders already stalk a cavalry patrol, setting the scene. Haycox's original story establishes this perilous atmosphere in his first sentence, 'This was one of those years in the Territory when Apache smoke signals spiralled up from the stony mountain summits and many a ranch cabin lay as a square of blackened ashes on the ground.'

After B-movies, it was obvious to Wayne that he'd have to do some proper acting in *Stagecoach*. His performance style, even in his early films, was reacting to those

around him. For *Stagecoach*, Ford had the experienced actors do the acting and kept cutting back to Wayne, keeping him the centre of attention without the actor having to do anything. In *Variety* in January 1976, Wayne said, 'Perhaps I've projected something closer to my personality than other actors have. I have very few tricks… I'll stop in the middle of a sentence so they'll keep looking at me and I don't stop at the end so they don't look away.'

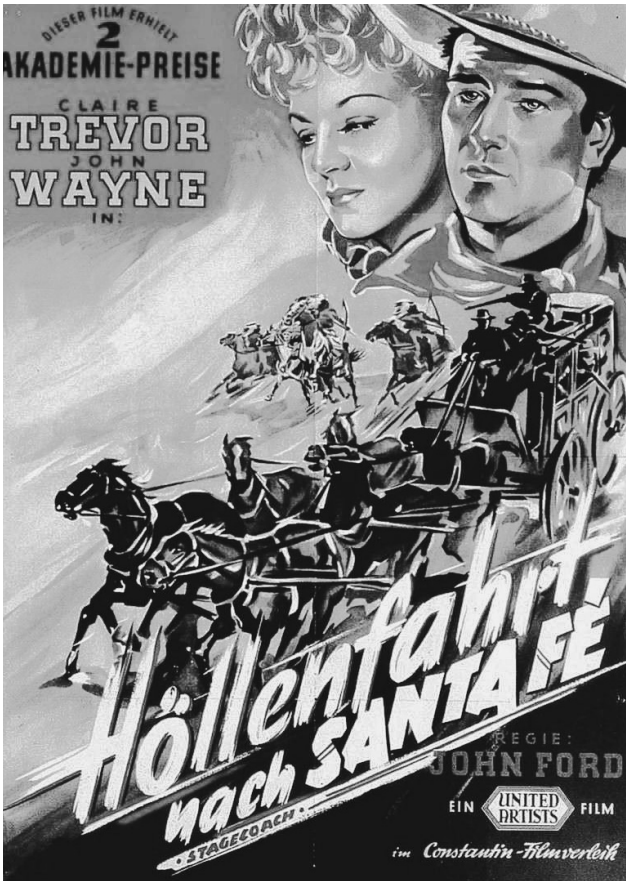
The stagecoach passengers split into two groups: the 'respectable' and the 'disreputable'. The respectable are Peacock, Mrs Mallory and two more dubious characters: shifty gambler Hatfield (a 'Man of Mystery' according to the film's advertising) and the president of the 'Miners and Cattlemen's Bank', Gatewood (sometimes billed as 'Gateswood'), who has stolen a payroll. The disreputable are outlaw Ringo, prostitute Dallas and cheerful drunk Doc Boone, who befriends the whisky drummer with the words, 'Samples? Mmm…' Ford deliberately blurs the lines between these groups. It is insinuated that Southern gentleman Hatfield, who sees himself as the noble protector of Mrs Mallory, is a 'backshooter', while pontificating Gatewood is actually on the run with $50,000 in stolen funds. Mrs Mallory is a prim and proper officer's wife, who dislikes Doc's cigar smoke, the dust, the bumpy journey, the presence of Dallas and Ringo, and the Apaches – in fact just about everything seems to bother her. But when she goes into labour at Apache Wells, she is forced to rely on Doc Boone's expertise, a man who has previously been described as not being capable of doctoring a horse. Characteristically, Ford reserves his most poetic compositions for Ringo and Dallas, romanticising the 'outsiders'. In a typically elegiac Fordian shot, Dallas walks down a corridor at Apache Wells, watched by Ringo, with long shadows cast by the moonlit portal.

Dallas has suffered the narrow-minded bigotry of the ladies in the Tonto Law and Order League, an uppity Temperance Union, who run her out of town. 'There's worse things than Apaches,' says Dallas, when she boards the coach, as the 'ladies' look down their noses at her. Doc notes, 'We're the victims of a foul disease called social prejudice, my child.' Doc even compares the stage to a tumbril, the vehicle used to take those condemned to the guillotine. Later, at Dry Fork, Mrs Mallory won't even sit opposite Ringo and Dallas. 'Looks like I got the plague,' observes Ringo glumly, 'I guess you can't break out of prison and into society in the same week.' But their ordeal on the journey unifies the group as they travel through the valley of death. Dallas protects Mrs Mallory's baby during the Apache attack, while Ringo's sharpshooting holds off the hostiles. In Lordsburg, Dallas and Mrs Mallory part, if not as friends, then at least on speaking terms.

Outlaw Ringo is also ostracised by the group, an outsider to civilised society. He isn't allowed to sit on a seat for much of the journey, hunched instead on the floor against the door. Real Concords had a centre seat too, doubling as a bed, which is missing here. Ford's introduction of Ringo, as he waylays the stage, became a classic western moment. A rifle shot stops the stage horses in their tracks, while Ford zooms in on Wayne, shouting 'Hold it!', twirling his Winchester with its outsized loading lever, in a cloud of dust. We later learn that Ringo is seeking revenge on the Plummers and Ford uses the final shootout in the darkened mainstreet of Lordsburg as a fitting

climax to the trek. Luke Plummer is playing cards in the saloon when he hears Ringo's in town, though he should heed the omens: Luke is holding 'Aces and Eights', Wild Bill Hickok's prophetic 'Dead Man's Hand'. Their duel, with Ringo versus the three Plummers, recalls Cheyenne Harry facing Placer Fremont in *Straight Shooting* (1917); one of the Plummers is even played by 'Fremont' – actor Vester Pegg. Once avenged, Ringo is allowed by Ford to escape 'civilisation', riding away with Dallas to his half-built cabin in the hills, their haven from the world, their 'crazy dream'. 'A man could live there,' prompts Ringo, 'and a woman.'

Stagecoach was previewed in Los Angeles in February 1939, before going on general release in March. Posters ran with the taglines: 'Danger Holds the reins as the Devil Cracks the Whip!', '2 Women on a Desperate Journey with 7 Strange Men' or 'A Powerful Story of 9 Strange People'. One poster depicted a map of their journey, detailing its incident-packed route, entitled 'A Strange Frontier Incident of 1885'. The trailer voiceover marvelled: 'What fantastic stories there were in the life of a stagecoach' and its passengers 'who found romance in danger and understanding in strange companionship.' Posters helpfully indicated, 'Due to the tremendous suspense developed in *Stagecoach* we recommend that you get to the theatre for the start of the picture'. It quickly turned Wayne into a mainstream star; 'Wayne is so good in the role,' noted the *New York Daily News*, 'that one wonders why he had to wait all this time since *The Big Trail* for such another opportunity.' Welford Beaton simplified the film to '*Grand Hotel* on wheels', while *Variety* called it a 'sweeping and powerful drama of the American frontier'. Frank S. Nugent, writing for the *New York Times*, concluded: 'This is one stagecoach that's powered by a Ford'.



Original German poster artwork depicting Dallas (Claire Trevor), Ringo (John Wayne) and the title vehicle: John Ford's *Stagecoach*. (courtesy of Ian Caunce Collection).

The film grossed well in the US (though it wasn't the runaway hit as presumed

today) and Thomas Mitchell won the 1939 Best Supporting Actor Oscar, while it failed to win Best Picture, Best Director and Cinematography. It shared the Oscar for Best Score with *The Wizard of Oz*. The score was adapted and arranged from 13 American folk tunes of the period, including 'Shall We Gather at the River?', 'Lily Dale', 'Ten Thousand Cattle', 'Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair', 'Gentle Annie', 'Rosa Lee', 'She May have seen Better Days' and 'She's More to be Pitied than Censured'. *Stagecoach* was retitled for European releases. In Germany it was titled *Ringo* or *Höllenfahrt nach Santa Fé* ('Hell Travels from Santa Fe'); in Italy it was *Ombre Rosse* ('Red Shadows'). *Stagecoach*'s release in France as *La Chevauchée Fantastique* ('The Fantastic Ride') established Ford's reputation as a major director.

The Wayne–Trevor teaming was swiftly capitalised on by RKO, who cast them in *Allegheny Uprising* (1939 – *The First Rebel* in the UK), a *Drums Along the Mohawk* rip-off, and Republic, who made the pre-Civil War *The Dark Command* (1940). The latter was notable for another spectacular stunt by Canutt: here four men drive a two-horse flatbed wagon off a cliff into a river. *Dark Command* featured Gabby Hayes in a supporting role and with its A-movie $700,000 budget was little more than an elaborate version of the Lone Star westerns, with larger sets and an expensive cast.

Optimistically, *Stagecoach* was remade twice. In 1966 the stagecoach travelled to Cheyenne, with Alex Cord (Ringo), Bing Crosby (Doc Boone), Ann-Margret (Dallas), Van Heflin (Sheriff Curly Wilcox), Slim Pickens (driver Buck), Red Buttons (Peacock), Mike Connors (Hatfield), Stephanie Powers (Mrs Mallory) and Keenan Wynn (Luke Plummer). In 1986, a TV country music version of the film featured members of the appropriately named band The Highwaymen: Johnny Cash played Sheriff Curley, Kris Kristofferson was Ringo and Waylon Jennings was Hatfield, while Doc Boone became Doc Holliday, as portrayed by Willie Nelson. June Carter Cash and her son John also appeared. The lively country shuffle theme song, voiced by Nelson, warns: 'We gotta get to Lordsburg and we gotta be on time – but there's trouble up ahead and close behind.' Other westerns following in *Stagecoach*'s tracks include *Stagecoach to Fury* (1956), *Stagecoach to Dancers' Rock* (1962) and *Hombre* (1967), with disparate groups of passengers trapped in a variety of desperate situations.

Stagecoach changed the way audiences and critics viewed westerns, and Ford was hailed a genius, re-establishing his reputation as the foremost poet of the genre after 13 years away. When asked in 1967 who were his favourite US directors, Orson Welles replied, 'The old masters, by which I mean John Ford, John Ford and John Ford.' As for John Wayne, he'd hitched a ride on a stagecoach and his career was finally going somewhere. He completed his last four 'Three Mesquiteer' outings for Republic, fulfilling his contract, and left B-movies in a cloud of dust.

2

'Shakespeare in Tombstone'

— *My Darling Clementine* (1946)

***My Darling Clementine* (1946)**
Credits
DIRECTOR – John Ford
PRODUCER – Samuel G. Engel
STORY – Sam Hellman
SCREENPLAY – Samuel G. Engel and Winston Miller
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY – Joseph P. MacDonald
EDITOR – Dorothy Spencer
ART DIRECTORS – James Basevi, Lyle Wheeler, Thomas Little and Fred J. Rode
MUSIC – Cyril J. Mockridge and David Buttolph
A 20th Century-Fox Production
Released by 20th Century-Fox
97 minutes
Cast
Henry Fonda (Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp); Linda Darnell (Chihuahua); Victor Mature (John Henry 'Doc' Holliday); Cathy Downs (Clementine Carter); Walter Brennan (N.H. 'Old Man' Clanton); Tim Holt (Virgil Earp); Ward Bond (Morgan Earp); Don Gardner (James Earp); Alan Mowbray (Granville Thorndyke); John Ireland (Billy Clanton); Grant Withers (Ike Clanton); Fred Libby (Phin Clanton); Mickey Simpson (Sam Clanton); Roy Roberts (Mayor of Tombstone); Jane Darwell (Kate Nelson); Russell Simpson (Deacon John Simpson); Francis Ford (Dad); J. Farrell MacDonald (Mac, Oriental Saloon barman); Ben Hall (Bon Ton barber); Charles Stevens (Drunken Indian Charlie); Arthur Walsh (Hotel clerk); Jack Pennick (Stagecoach driver); Louis Mercier (François, the chef);

Jack Curtis (Bartender); Harry Woods (Luke, Tombstone marshal); Robert Alder and Jack Pennick (Stage drivers); Don Barclay (Bird Cage owner); Mae Marsh (Deacon's sister); Arthur Walsh (Mansion House clerk)

* * *

When a silver lode was discovered in the Apache lands of Arizona by Ed Schiefflin in 1877, the settlement of Tombstone rose around the spot; the prospector was originally searching the area for quartz stones and the town's name came from Schiefflin's friend who commented: 'Reckon the only stone you're gonna find'll be your tombstone.' Tombstone has passed into legend, linked inextricably to one man: Marshal Wyatt Earp, hero of 1881's Gunfight at the 'Old Kinderhook' (O.K.) Corral.

The accepted historical version of Earp's exploits at the O.K. Corral was recounted in Stuart N. Lake's highly successful biography, 'Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal', published in 1931 following a serialisation in the *Saturday Evening Post*. It is here that the town-tamer image of Earp originated, but it has since been accepted as a whitewash. Lake even armed his hero with a Buntline Special, a Colt Peacemaker with an extra long barrel, an embellishment for which there is no evidence. Lake's heroic Earp and his two brothers Virgil and Morgan, plus gambling dentist Doc

East Mitten Butte looms like a tombstone in Monument Valley, where John Ford filmed *My Darling Clementine* in 1946. (Photograph courtesy of Victoria Millington and Mark Chester.)

Holliday, faced the Clanton-McLaury clan in the streets of Tombstone on the afternoon of 26 October 1881. Later sources noted that some of the Clanton faction were unarmed. As Earp's wife Josephine once observed, 'I can't imagine why anyone called it the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. It could more accurately be called the gunfight west of Fly's house. The O.K. Corral was several doors up the street.'

Early film versions of Lake's story were *Frontier Marshal* (1934 – with George O'Brien as fictitious 'Michael Wyatt') and Alan Dwan's *Frontier Marshal* (1939). Dwan's film, as adapted by writer Sam Hellman, opens with the town's founding on a silver lode ('a mushroom metropolis sprang up overnight'), with saloon owner John Carradine claiming, 'They ran me out of Lordsburg' (an apparent in-joke reference to his appearance in *Stagecoach*). Randolph Scott starred as Wyatt Earp, who is introduced in a scene where he apprehends drunken 'Indian Charlie'. Cesar Romero was Doc Holliday (here spelt Halliday), an obstetrician, and Ward Bond appeared as the cowardly marshal of Tombstone. Some moments are quite light-hearted (a coroner's report on the corpse of Big Nose Jackson states 'Body rich in lead – too badly punctured to hold whisky'), but according to Dwan, the lawman in *Frontier Marshal* was never meant to be the 'real Earp'.

Ford knew the real Earp and kept the lawman's rifle by his bed. In Earp's later years, he lived north of Pasadena and when his wife went away for the weekend, Earp would travel up to Universal City to watch westerns being made, in his capacity as 'technical advisor'. When Earp died in 1929, aged 80, cowboy stars Tom Mix and William S. Hart were bearers at his funeral. Ford's collaborator Harry Carey had asked Earp about the O.K. Corral and Earp even drew a sketch of the shootout. Earp said that he had not been a good shot and had to get in close. He remembered that the stagecoach was due to arrive and timed it so the dust cloud would give him cover. Ford memorised such details for future reference, but as Henry Fonda noted, 'Ford used history, he wasn't married to it.'

Ford was attracted to the Earp story and had the backing of 20th Century-Fox's Darryl F. Zanuck. The director claimed not to have seen Dwan's *Frontier Marshal* (also made by Fox), but evidence proves he screened it in October 1945, when preparing his own version, to be called *My Darling Clementine*. With Lake's fiction as a basis, Ford took screenwriter Sam Hellman's Dwan adaptation as the truth. This was turned into a screenplay by Ford and Winston Miller by March 1946.

In *My Darling Clementine*, drover Wyatt Earp and his brothers Virgil, Morgan and James, are taking their cattle to market when they arrive in Tombstone. But the herd is stolen and James is killed by rustlers; local ranchers the Clantons, led by patriarch Old Man Clanton, are the chief suspects. Wyatt, an ex-lawman, agrees to become Tombstone's marshal, with Morgan and Virgil as his deputies. Wyatt meets tubercular gambler Doc Holliday, a shady character, whose relationship with saloon girl Chihuahua causes friction: she is also seeing Billy Clanton. The arrival of Holliday's lover Clementine Carter from back east further complicates matters. Wyatt and Clementine begin a hesitant courtship, but when Billy is killed by Wyatt – after the Clanton has killed Chihuahua – and the Clantons murder Virgil, the families' rivalry intensifies. At a dawn rendezvous at the O.K. Corral, the Earps face

the Clantons. In the gunfight, Doc is killed, but the Clantons are wiped out. Morgan and Wyatt move on, though Wyatt promises that he'll be back one day to see Clementine, now the town's school ma'am.

Ford obviously wasn't happy with the way the script developed, as he tried unsuccessfully to convince Zanuck to alter all the names to fictional ones. In reality, Holliday survived the final gunfight and even the year on James Earp's grave is incorrect: 1882, when it should be 1881. The film had several differences from the original script; as written, Holliday is shot before the final gunfight, Old Man Clanton survives (Morgan shoots him in the film) and Clementine and Wyatt's final goodbye was in a graveyard, not on the edge of Tombstone.

Henry Fonda had worked with Ford with great success on *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *Drums Along the Mohawk* (both 1939) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). He'd also appeared in William A. Wellman's powerful western allegory *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943 – released in the UK as *Strange Incident*). Written by Lamar Trotti, after a novel by Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Fonda and Harry Morgan starred as two drifters, Gil Carter and Art Croft, who become embroiled in a lynching near the Nevada town of Bridger's Wells, in 1885. Kincaid, a local rancher, is murdered and his cattle stolen. The lynch mob find three cowboys (Dana Andrews, Anthony Quinn and John Ford's brother, Francis) camped out at the Ox-Bow, but despite their innocent protestations, the trio are hanged. Later it becomes apparent that Kincaid isn't dead and those responsible for the rustling have been caught. Some of the posse, including Carter, had tried to intervene, and Wellman's film ends on a resonant, downbeat note. In Darby's Saloon, Carter reads aloud a letter – from one of the executed men to his wife – to the hot-headed vigilantes, now ashamed, 'There can't be any such thing as civilisation unless people have got a conscience, because if people touch God anywhere, where is it except through their conscience?' Photographed in brooding, expressionistic style by Arthur Miller, and since acclaimed as one of the greatest westerns ever made and one of the first with psychological depth, *The Ox-Bow Incident*'s wartime release was tragically mistimed; the *New York Herald Tribune* called it 'a depressing arrival in days that are depressing enough already'.

The day after Fonda finished making *Ox-Bow*, he enlisted in the navy. When demobbed, in October 1945, his first role was Wyatt Earp in *My Darling Clementine*, although Tyrone Power and Douglas Fairbanks Jnr had also been in the running. Opposite Fonda, Ford cast muscly Victor Mature, an actor not known for his subtle portrayals, as tubercular, champagne-quaffing Doc Holliday, though Power, Vincent Price and James Stewart were considered. Described in his publicity as 'a beautiful hunk of a man', critics noted that Mature was 'about as tubercular as a kodiak bear'. The son of a scissors grinder, Mature went on to become a star in 'sword and sandal' epics like *Samson and Delilah* (1949), *The Robe* (1953) and *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954), which better suited his image, as did his turn as *Chief Crazy Horse* (1955) in the colourful Black Hills-shot biopic. Frequent Ford collaborator Wardell 'Ward' Bond appeared as Wyatt's brother Morgan; Tim Holt (from *Stagecoach*) played Virgil. Walter Brennan made a memorable Old Man Clanton, even though he hated working with Ford and vowed never to again. Popular actress Linda Darnell, who resembled

Jane Russell, had been on contract at Fox since she was 18 and played fiery Chihuahua. Alan Mowbray was a theatre actor, ideal for travelling thespian Granville Thorndyke, a 'sterling tragedian'. Jeanne Crain, Donna Reed and Anne Baxter were prospective Clementines, until Cathy Downs secured the title role. Jane Darwell was saloon madam Kate Nelson. Darwell had been memorable as an advocate of lynch law in *The Ox-Bow Incident* and as poor Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*; her last appearance was as the bird woman in *Mary Poppins* (1964), feeding the birds for 'tuppence a bag'. Charles Stevens, the grandson of Geronimo, was cast as drunkard Indian Charlie, the same role he had played in *Frontier Marshal*.

My Darling Clementine was planned in Technicolor, but even with a large $2 million budget, it was eventually photographed in black and white by Joseph P. MacDonald, from April to June 1946. Interiors were shot on Stage B at Fox Studios. In *The American West of John Ford*, Fonda revisited the levelled Fox lot in 1971 and when confronted with the modern skyscrapers standing in its place, noted, 'It's been homesteaded!' The set for Tombstone and the O.K. Corral were constructed in the north-western corner of Monument Valley for $250,000, on the site where the Visitors' Centre now stands. The Mansion House hotel, the adobe jailhouse and the smoky, lantern-lit Oriental Saloon are the settings for much of the action. The Bird Cage Theatre and the Oriental were actual establishments in Tombstone, whose busy main thoroughfare was Allen Street, filled with pool halls, drinking dens and stores. The Clantons' ranch and a Wells Fargo way station were also in Monument Valley. A frantic chase, when Wyatt pursues Doc (who is riding shotgun on the 'Bisbee-Tombstone-Tucson' bullion stage) and heads him off at the Huachuca Pass, was also filmed there. Ford filmed the Earps' cattle drive among the towering buttes and mesas, James's grave is below Castle Rock and King-on-his-Throne, and Wyatt rides off towards the distinctive, rocket-shaped El Capitan (also called Agathla Peak) at the film's conclusion. When lensing was completed, Ford donated the Tombstone set to the local Navajos. Stunning and expansive when filmed in sunlight, Monument Valley's buttes and mesas have a tendency to loom like giant grave markers during overcast or stormy weather – an apt place for Ford to construct his 'Tombstone'.

Fonda's Earp is as noble a hero as has ever appeared in a western: incorruptible and honest, tough, yet shy and nervous around Clementine. He doesn't smoke, seldom drinks and his only vice is poker. The real Earps were involved in all sorts of iniquity (they had a 10% share in the Oriental Saloon) and were known as 'The Fighting Pimps'. Tombstone is soon a much quieter place than the 'wide awake, wide open town' the Earps arrive in. But Ford also paints charming Earp as a daydreamer, leaning back in his chair outside the Mansion House, arms outstretched, balancing his feet on the porch post, then deftly skipping from foot to foot like a high-wire walker. Fonda improvised this scene on set and reckoned he was asked more about it than any other moment in his career.

Ford liked the way Fonda moved; he especially liked Fonda's unique, stately walk. For the Sunday morning church dedication scene, Wyatt takes Clementine's arm and they walk to the half-constructed church, with its spindly tower, ladder and cross, as the bell tolls and the community sing 'Shall We Gather at the River'. Wyatt gingerly

asks Clementine, 'Will you oblige me, ma'am?' as the locals clear the floor so that the marshal and 'his lady fair' can dance to the folksy hoedown 'Oh, Dem Golden Slippers'. Wyatt dances stiffly but enthusiastically, awkwardly lifting his leg in the manner of a dancer who hates to be the centre of attention.

Doc Holliday, the dark antithesis of Wyatt, resembles less-than-honourable gambler Hatfield in *Stagecoach*. Doc is of the night, dressed in black and he is an alcoholic. He periodically slips away on unexplained trips to Mexico and it would have been interesting to see what horror stalwart Vincent Price would have made of the role. In reality, Holliday had a moustache and was a dentist, but Ford makes him a clean-shaven surgeon. Doc's horrible coughing fits, triggered by the chokingly smoky Oriental, are a constant reminder of his mortality; Mature is very good in the role, though he did actually have bronchial pneumonia for part of the shoot. There's a moment in Doc's haunted past he can't return to – a time when he was happy, a part of him that is now dead. When Thorndyke recites the 'To be or not to be' speech from *Hamlet* in a dingy bar ('Look Yorick, can't you give us nothin' but them poems?' complain the Clantons), Doc is able to step in when the thespian forgets his lines, 'Thus conscience,' remembers Doc, 'does make cowards of us all.' Later, tired of living, Doc decides, 'It's time I tempted fate.'

Clementine is one of Ford's best films and many fans favour it over all his other westerns. Unlike Ford's *Stagecoach* or *The Searchers* there is no journey element driving the story, but the leisurely plot is still involving. Ford explores two very different love stories: Wyatt and Clem, and Doc and Chihuahua. Tongue-tied Wyatt admires Clementine from afar. At one point he watches her talking to Doc – obviously she's still in love with the surgeon – and muses to Irish bartender Mac, 'You ever been in love?' 'No,' comes the answer, 'I've been a bartender all my life.' Wyatt emerges from the 'Bon Ton Tonsorial Parlor' with a slick new hairstyle and a whiff of perfume, and stands beside Clementine outside the Mansion House one bright Sunday morning. 'The air's so clean and clear,' says Clem, taking a deep breath, 'The scent of the desert flower.' 'That's me,' admits Wyatt, sheepishly – 'Barber.' This prudish romance is in contrast to Doc and Chihuahua's tempestuous relationship in the town bars, where she performs songs and he drinks his lunch and gambles away his life.

The unhurried middle section of the film also allows Ford to paint a moving picture of life in a growing western town, with diversions to the theatre (for a performance of 'The Convict's Oath'), to busy saloons and to a church dance – the foundations of civilisation have been laid. Ford's realistic settings and costumes give the film a documentary feel, as the prairie schooners roll by and Tombstone becomes more refined. Joseph Patrick MacDonald's monochrome photography enhances this realism, with every gnarled fence post, warped, grainy floorboard and dimly lit corner infused with the privation and toughness of frontier life in an inhospitable land.

Wyatt only becomes marshal to revenge his brother (it was in fact Virgil who took the marshal's job) and although the film begins with James's murder, the revenge element is shunted aside for almost an hour of the film. James's silver 'cingadera' cross icon is stolen during his murder and later reappears around Chihuahua's neck. She lies that she was given it as a present by Doc, but under questioning reveals it

was Billy Clanton who gave it to her, implicating the clan. The Clantons are demonic villains, particularly Old Man, the patriarch, a snarling, whip-wielding maniac, who tells his sons, 'When you pull a gun, kill a man' (he resembles bullwhacker Red Flack in *The Big Trail*). When the two groups collide, Ford's gunfight at the O.K. Corral sees Morgan, Doc and Wyatt, plus two Tombstone allies (Jess and the Deacon), versus Old Man Clanton and his three sons: Ike, Phin and Sam (Billy having been killed). In actuality, N.H. 'Old Man' Clanton was dead by the time of the gunfight (murdered by Mexican *vaqueros*) and Ike was the head of the Clanton-McLaury clan, none of whom were named Sam. The historical participants were Morgan, Doc, Virgil and Wyatt facing Ike and Billy Clanton, Tom and Frank McLaury, and Billy Claiborne. All three Earps, Doc, Ike and Claiborne survived; Tom, Frank and Billy Clanton didn't. Ford butchers the entire Clanton family and kills off Doc for dramatic effect – his completely fictitious scenario rewrote history, via Stuart Lake and Wyatt Earp.

During the making of *Clementine*, Ford had pruned Fonda and Mature's dialogue and cut some scenes (for example, a fight between Chihuahua and Clementine). Producer Samuel Engel worked on the script on location and gained a co-writer's credit. Ford prepared a preview version, screened in June 1946, but Zanuck called it 'a disappointment'; the producer wanted to take out 30 minutes and re-shoot, dub and score other scenes. This he did in July, with no further involvement from Ford. Many re-shoots, including the scene where Wyatt visits his brother's grave, were directed by Lloyd Bacon. Zanuck's deletions include Chihuahua kissing Billy outside the saloon and Wyatt complaining to Doc that champagne tastes like 'fermented vinegar'. The night-time conversation between Doc and Clementine in the street was re-shot; the arrival of the settlers for the church dedication was abridged (with the folksong 'Oh Susanna' removed); and wounded Chihuahua's operation scene was originally longer.

The aftermath of the final gunfight was also considerably cut. In Ford's version, Morgan and Wyatt look down at Doc's corpse and Wyatt says, 'I'll get his boots' (Fonda still mouths this line in the cut version), then Jess and the Deacon appear and look down at the body. Also cut is a scene where Wyatt and Morgan are given some provisions by the locals outside the Mansion House ('Here's some specialities for you, Mr Marshal') and say their farewells ('Well goodbye folks. Me and my brothers, we're obliged to you'). The biggest change was the new ending, replacing Clementine and Wyatt's handshake with a kiss on the cheek. Zanuck liked the original ending, but 2,000 people at the preview didn't, feeling 'cheated'. So the kiss was filmed in October and inserted into the footage. Zanuck also tampered with the music, re-scoring some scenes and adding cues to others, to showcase the popular standard, 'My Darling Clementine', though the lyric has nothing to do with Wyatt Earp, but rather a 'miner, forty-niner and his daughter, Clementine'. *Clementine* was the last film Ford would make for Fox, a company he had been on contract with since 1921. What is left of his original preview version has now been made available on DVD from the UCLA Archive and runs six minutes longer than Zanuck's inferior, official 93-minute release.

Posters proclaimed 'Darryl F. Zanuck Presents John Ford's *My Darling Clementine*', a film that was; 'The Roaring West At Its Restless Best!' Another tagline

said: 'She was Everything the West Was – Young, Fiery, Exciting!' – a more apt description of Chihuahua than Clementine. One poster depicted a large, framed painting of Chihuahua, inferring she was the 'Clementine' of the title, and Darnell appears in more of the publicity artwork than Downs. The trailer announced that 'The director of the unforgettable *Stagecoach* now thrills the world with his newest triumph – here's mighty excitement that combines the exciting action of reckless pioneer days (with) the romantic conflicts of men and women who lead perilous lives'. It was premiered in San Francisco on 16 October 1946. Critic Bosley Crowther wrote, 'Fonda, through his quiet, yet persuasive self-confidence – his delicious intonation of short words – shows us an elemental character who is as real as the dirt on which he walks'. *Lux Radio Theatre* aired an adaptation in 1947, with Fonda in the lead and the film took $2.8 million in the US on its initial release. In the UK, it received an 'A' rating. It was called *Sfida Infernale* ('Infernal Challenge') in Italy, *La Poursuite Infernale* ('The Infernal Chase') in France and *Tombstone*, a title later used for George Cosmatos's 1993 Wyatt Earp biography, in Germany.

The other big western of 1946 was *Duel in the Sun*, but the contrast with Ford's film couldn't be greater. *Duel* was driven by producer David Oliver Selznick, the man behind *Gone With the Wind* (1939), and starred his wife, Jennifer Jones, as wildcat Pearl Chavez. Pearl is sent to live with her cousin Laura Belle (Lillian Gish), who is married to Senator McCanles (Lionel Barrymore), the head of the Spanish Bit ranch. Their two sons, tough Lewt (Gregory Peck) and lawyer Jesse (Joseph Cotton), compete for Pearl's affections under the hot Arizona sun. *Duel* cost $5.25 million (including $2 million in advertising), with a railway track and the 'Spanish Bit' being built on location near Tucson. The opening scene for the debauched revelry in the vast Presidio Palance of Chance Saloon, deploys more extras than the whole of *Clementine*. *Duel* is an overblown, hysterical western, picturesque in Technicolor, but also tasteless,

Italian poster for John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946), depicting Doc (Victor Mature), Chihuahua (Linda Darnell) and Wyatt (Henry Fonda). (Photograph courtesy of Ian Caunce collection.)

self-regarding and tedious. Audiences christened it, 'Lust in the Dust' due to Jones's sultry performance (Lewt describes Pearl as 'a hot tamale') and for characters like 'The Sin Killer' (a hellfire and brimstone turn by Walter Huston), who exorcises Pearl's lusty urges – or so he thinks. Following previews the censors intervened, abridging or removing 40 scenes at a cost of $200,000, while *Tidings*, the L.A. Catholic journal warned: 'It tends to throw audiences on the side of sin'. Audiences didn't mind. Accounting for inflation, *Duel in the Sun* is the most financially successful western of all time.

Ford followed *My Darling Clementine* with the Technicolor *3 Godfathers* (1946). Desperados Bob (John Wayne), Pedro (Pedro Armendariz Jnr) and the Abilene Kid (Harry Carey Jnr) rob the bank in Welcome, Arizona, and escape into the desert where they discover an expectant mother. She gives birth to a boy and before dying makes the trio promise to look after the child. Taking advice from the Bible, they follow a guiding star. Both the Kid and Pedro die of thirst, before Bob and the baby reach New Jerusalem and safety. Ford's *Wagonmaster* (1950), one of his favourite films, shared some of *Clementine*'s atmosphere and its black and white location photography, this time in Moab, Utah. It detailed a wagon train's conflict with the Clegg clan, who resembled the Clantons. In Ford's *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964), James Stewart played Wyatt Earp and Arthur Kennedy was Doc Holliday in the Dodge City sequence, reputedly based on fact, where news of Cheyenne warriors nearby causes panic in town (though some prints omit the scenes). It was intended by Ford as a comedy interlude, to lighten the mood and stop audiences drifting off to the toilet. As Ford said to Stewart, 'You're a hell of an intermission.'

My Darling Clementine is as factually inaccurate as *Frontier Marshal*, *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* and other renderings of the Earp legend. It seems that Ford, for his artistic talent and expert drama, is excused such licence in the name of poeticism. If it's not how it actually happened, it's how it should have. In the 1971 CBS documentary *The American West of John Ford*, Stewart says of Ford, with reference to *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, 'He prints the legend … and that's a fact.' Ford certainly did in *My Darling Clementine*.

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